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Sitting time intervention reduces neck-shoulder pain among office workers

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Conclusion

Neck-shoulder pain was reduced among office workers in the Take a Stand! intervention. There were no changes for pain in back-lower back and extremities.

Why

Sitting at work has been found to increase musculoskeletal pain. The workplace intervention Take a Stand! reduced accelerometer-measured sitting time at work by 71 minutes after 1 month and 48 minutes after 3 months (Danquah et al. 2016). We therefore aimed to study the effects on musculoskeletal pain.

How

A 3 months intervention including five elements:

1. Local ambassadors and management support
2. Environmental changes
3. Lecture on sitting time and health
4. Workshop ensuring local adaptation at individual, office and workplace level
5. E-mails and text messages.

The intervention focused on four strategies to reduce sitting:

- a. Using a sit-stand desk
- b. Breaking up prolonged periods of sitting
- c. Having standing and walking meetings
- d. Setting common goals at office level.

Control participants were instructed to behave as usual.

Who

Take a Stand! was a cluster randomized controlled trial aiming to reduce sitting time among office workers. Four workplaces with a total of 317 participants from 19 offices participated in the trial. All participants had sit-stand desks.

What

After three months the OR for pain in neck-shoulders was 0.52 (95%CI 0.30:0.92, $p=0.02$) in the control group compared to the intervention group taking baseline values into account. No differences were found between the intervention and control group for pain in back-lower back and extremities over the three months intervention period. See figure 1.

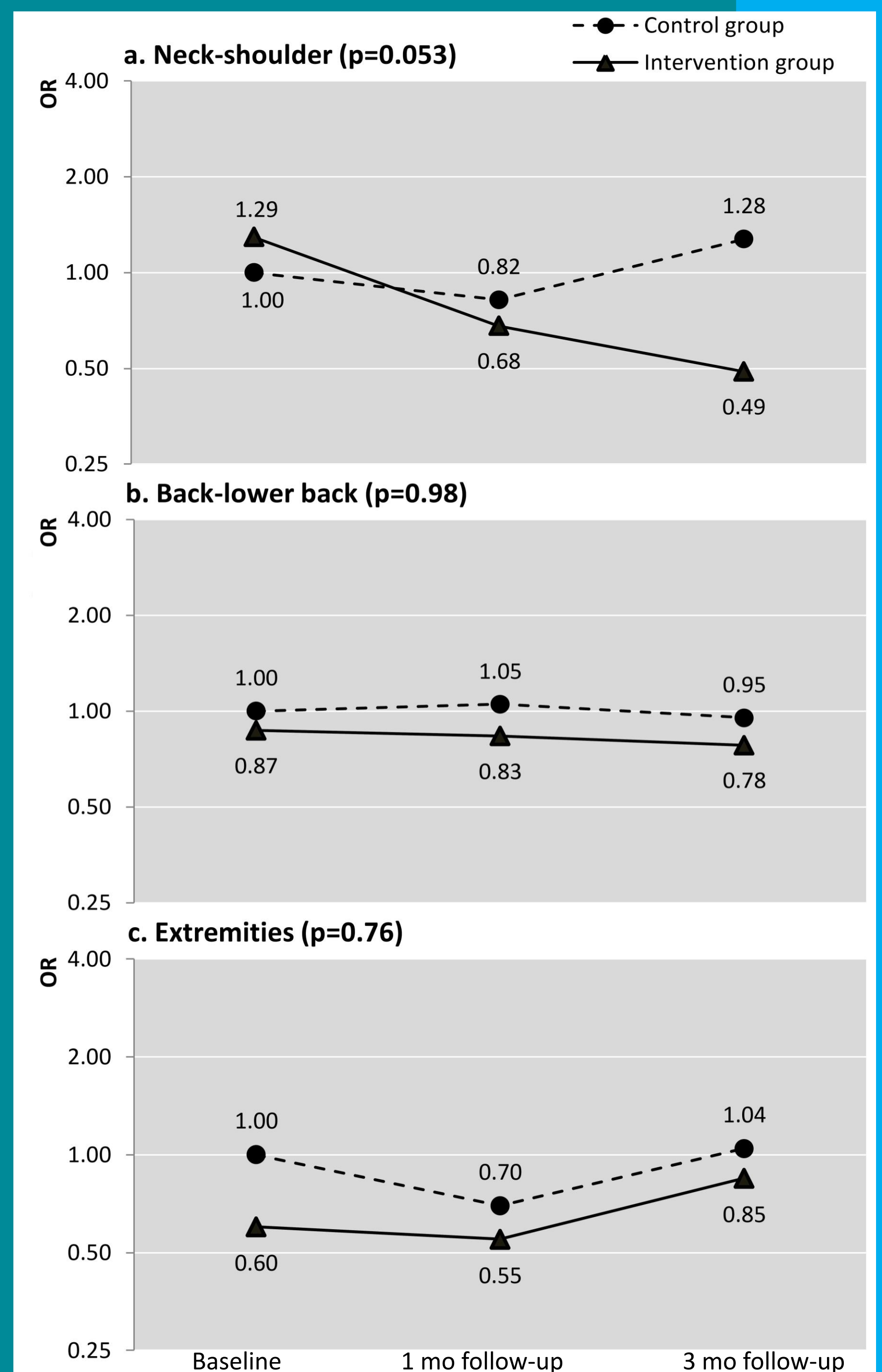


Figure 1: OR for pain in neck-shoulders, back-lower back and extremities at baseline, 1 month and 3 months follow-up.



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Reference: Danquah IH, Kloster S, Holtermann A, Aadahl M, Bauman A, Ersboll AK, et al. Take a Stand!-a multi-component intervention aimed at reducing sitting time among office workers-a cluster randomized trial. International journal of epidemiology. 2016.